

**GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**Wednesday, July 9, 2008 – 6:00pm**

**Glenwood Recreation Center – 2010 Coliseum Blvd.**

**PRESENT:** John Beaman, Jr., Paul Brown, Marc Bush, Ken Free, Lori Galbreath, David Hoggard, Rose Marie Ponton

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Paula Boykin, Steve Branson, Candice Bruton, John Hughes, Bonnie Kuester, Dan Maxson, Keith Morrison, Darious Oliver, Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Laurie Thore, Larry Tilley, Terry Ward, Bernadette White, Chris Wilson

**OTHERS:** Demp Bradford (Sports Commission), Matt Brown (Coliseum), Scott Johnson (Coliseum), Bob Morgan (Deputy City Manager), Alex Ashton (Guilford County), Butch Shumate (Facilities and Engineering)

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Glenwood Recreation Center. David Hoggard, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the May 14, 2008 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

**Recognition**

Bonnie Kuester, Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation July Employee of the Month, Larry Tilley.

Eagle Scout, Ben Whitley, was recognized by Steve Branson, Regional Parks Superintendent, for designing and building the Fun for All Playground sign at Hagan-Stone Park.

**Glenwood Recreation Center Presentation**

Paula Boykin, Glenwood Center Director, informed the Commission of events and programs currently held at the center.

**SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

- NONE -

**OLD BUSINESS**

*David Hoggard took prerogative of the Chair and stated that the Commission would now hear the War Memorial Stadium Request presentation.*

**War Memorial Stadium Request**

John Hughes, Youth and Community Programs Manager, stated that there is a request for War Memorial Stadium as a venue for A&T Homecoming. The War Memorial Stadium policy states that the stadium can only be utilized for baseball. If this request is approved the policy would need to be revisited. Hughes then turned the presentation over to Matt Brown, Greensboro Coliseum Director.

Brown stated that earlier this year, in the absence of a Special Events Manager, the City Manager's Office asked Scott Johnson, Deputy Coliseum Director, to absorb some responsibilities of coordinating activities. Johnson requested permission from the City Manager to become involved with the A&T Pavilion event since the Coliseum currently hosts and co-promotes 3 successful events with A&T. The idea is to draw in the community and the kids within the community as part of the A&T Homecoming activities. Feedback from attendees last year shows the desire for more kid activities. The plan would be to use War Memorial Stadium and the parking lot to create activities for the kids. Such activities would include carnival rides and blow up rides that would fit conveniently in the outfield area. The infield area would not be used. Barriers would be placed to differentiate the outfield from the infield. A portion of the right field corner fence would be removed and replaced with a consistent chain link fence and padding like what is currently in the other outfield area. This would remove an eyesore, eliminate maintenance of the current structure and would be a consistent looking outfield. This would allow the creation of a 20 foot vista and allow a controlled entry access to the outfield. This would also allow easier access for light trucks. Precautionary measures will be taken to protect the turf from damage and the field will be completely reconditioned by the following Monday at 5:00pm. Staff will promote and market this event that would be held October 10-12, 2008. This event is known as "The Pavilion" and would now be called "Aggie Homecoming Fan Fest". This event would allow entertainment for those who do not go see the game. Precautions for inclement weather will be in place, such as placing plywood where needed for vehicle usage.

Coliseum staff has talked with John Hughes, Chris Wilson, Jimmy Sloan, and Lynne Leonard about the option of offering the pavilion at the Coliseum to be used by the Farmer's Market for their annual "Fall Festival" during the A&T Homecoming.

Hoggard stated that he supports this event.

Kuester stated that the Farmer's Market vendors are in support of having their Fall Festival at the Coliseum. Plenty of marketing would take place to inform the public of this transition.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Marc Bush and seconded by Ken Free to accept this proposal and allow this use for the A&T Homecoming. This motion makes known that it this is more than a one time event and can continue years to come. This motion also allows the adjustment to the War Memorial Stadium Policy to reflect this exception. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

***David Hoggard took prerogative of the Chair and stated that the Commission would now hear the War Memorial Stadium Update presentation.***

#### **Memorial Stadium Update**

Hughes stated that the items to be presented are options and a decision has not been made. Previous and current option drawings for War Memorial Stadium were distributed to the Commission. Following this presentation a meeting with the Aycock neighborhood will be held to allow the neighborhood to see the same options. Perhaps this may be done during the August Commission meeting. Final recommendation would go before City Council and they will determine what action will be taken at the stadium. Hughes then turned the presentation over to Butch Shumate, Construction Projects Manager, Facilities and Engineering Department.

Shumate stated that Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce developed a design and worked with Sutton-Kennerly & Associates who also worked with us in 2003. They conducted a condition assessment report of the stadium. The report concluded that conditions have not improved since 2003 when the first assessment was conducted. Concrete continues to deteriorate and the rebar is getting smaller in diameter. There were a couple of areas of immediate

concern. Destructive testing was done on the left hand tower and there was some spalling in danger of falling off. Staff has since repaired this to where it is now stable. The four main beams holding the roof structure consisted of poor anchor bolts. Eleven out of twelve anchor bolts were completely rusted through. There was one bolt holding the whole roof structure. Staff replaced the anchor bolts and it is now stabilized. Sutton-Kennerly & Associates' estimate on structural repairs is 3-4 million dollars. This would allow another 10-15 years use of the stadium. The repairs would consist of the concrete structure portion and includes demolishing the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side. Another option to consider is to demolish the 1<sup>st</sup> base side all the way around what is left of the seating. The covered roof area on the right side, the 1500 seats, the exterior facade, and the two towers would be removed. Basically everything would be taken down to the exterior wall, leaving the wall standing. There would be recasting of the concrete risers, the seating slabs and seating area for approximately 1,000 people. Some of the infield masonry wall has settlement taking place. These walls, like the ones going around the restroom walls and locker walls, have been recommended to be replaced with new masonry walls. A verbal budget estimate has been given of 3-4 million dollars. This is not mentioned in the report. This does not include mechanical, electrical, and plumbing that would be involved. In order to bring the plumbing up to code, Shumate believes a more realistic cost would be 5-6 million dollars.

The original demolition was to remove the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side from the press box all the way to the foul pole. This was the demolition that went before City Council.

The demolition would be on the first base side where the home field lockers are. The 3-4 million dollar option is only going to allow 10-15 years of use verses 5-6 million dollars where there could be another 80 years of use. The exterior would look the same as it does now, but would need to be chipped off and re-coated. It would still have the historical look.

Marc Bush, Commissioner, stated that this has changed from the previous recommendation of a combination renovation and demolition. Discussions were held, a recommendation was made and there was a way to possibly pay for the 1.5 million dollars (for the first recommendation). Within 1-2 years this has increased to 4-5 million dollars.

Shumate stated that the 1.5 million dollars only included coatings and trying to stabilize some of the areas that were in disrepair and not conducting any structural repairs.

Bush inquired if we have an idea of how 4-5 million will be funded.

Shumate responded saying no.

Bush stated that he does not have a problem with the plan but has a problem with us not having the money to pay for it. Bush does not see anyone coming forward to assist in terms of the Parks and Recreation budget or the 2/3 bond and does not see this as a bond project at 4-5 million dollars when voters have turned it down in the past.

Bob Morgan, Deputy City Manager, stated that this information is being shared with the Commission as this Commission is the logical place to start. The most likelihood of funding would be the 2/3 bonds, which is where the 1.5 million dollars was coming from. The speed of deterioration was not expected and a decision has to be made on how much to spend. The last "band aid" project was a 5 year fix. Once input is received from the neighborhood this Commission will make a recommendation to City Council and they will make the final decision.

Bush inquired if the 2/3 bonds a possibility at this level.

Morgan stated yes, the 2/3 bonds can be used, but the availability of 2/3 bonds depends on how much debt is retired and believes we would have that amount the next couple of years.

Shumate stated that 1.3-1.4 million dollars is the remaining balance out of the 1.5 million dollars. The stadium is steadily getting worse. The more the steel is exposed the more it is rusting and the more it is expanding causing the concrete to fail.

Rose Marie Ponton, Commissioner inquired if the City has any plans for general maintenance for our facilities. Each year it is going to cost more and more so the stadium might as well be re-built.

Morgan replied stating that a better job needs to be done. The 2001 state cut back in funds is when the City began to cut back on the maintenance and never caught back up. Part of the bond package this Commission put together and presented to City Council included monies to start funding general maintenance. Part of the discussion of the budget, which Mitchell Johnson has mentioned to City Council, is to start looking into the budget for sufficient funds to cover the maintenance. Part of that dialogue resulted in City Council for the first time in many years saying to use 2/3 bonds money. It is Morgan's perception that City Council is comfortable with this.

Ponton stated that she believes years ago there was Capital maintenance in the City budget and Parks and Recreation is to the point that this needs to be looked at very heavily.

Shumate mentioned that as stated in the report the technology of the concrete in the 1920's, which is when the stadium was built, is not what it is today. Other facilities built in the 1920's are looking at the same situations, such as the MMOB sidewalks where after 35 years have some of the same deterioration.

Morgan stated that the original design showed that for a facility as old as this one the concrete was in pretty good condition and that some structures built in the 1940's and 1950's were in far worse shape.

Hoggard stated that Greensboro has two National Registry properties owned by the city, one being the Historical Museum. Hoggard sits on a committee that is creating a plan to keep the building maintained. A document is being drawn up showing what needs to be done to the museum every 4 years, 6 years, etc. The stadium is the other National Registry structure and perhaps a similar plan can be created.

Morgan stated that the neighborhood has been involved with this and would like the Commission to give their blessings to go talk to the neighborhood. This report needs to also be shared with City Council. Once this is complete recommendations from this Commission would need to be directed City Council.

Bush stated that we need to move forward. This item has been discussed for 4 years. Bush stated that he left a meeting a year ago believing something was going to be done with a way to pay for it. It is now again being re-visited and going to another level. Bush supports the idea but urges to move forward.

Lori Galbreath stated that she agrees with Bush believing a plan was in place, but now is not. Galbreath can most likely support this, but this item has been back and forth too much.

Although no action taken, the Commission unanimously supported that this item be taken to the neighborhood.

Paul Brown inquired when the lights were installed at the stadium and are the lights up to current standards.

Hughes replied stating that the lights were installed 10 years ago and the lighting is at top standard. Musco Lighting comes each year to check the lights. The lighting was installed for the Minor Leagues; therefore is approved for college, high school and youth baseball.

Bush made mention of the article in the News & Record about Mr. Self and War Memorial Stadium.

### **2008 Parks and Recreation Bond Proposal**

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Development Manager, informed the Commission that in May 2008 Parks and Recreation received word that the department has potential to be on the 2008 November bond. As a result of the Commission's subcommittee the department was presented with the opportunity to put a 20 million dollar package together for the City Managers Office. In that 20 million dollar package an emphasis was placed on what the subcommittee recommended which was athletic field development, park reinvestment, pools, and facility investment. Kuester presented the 20 million dollar package to City Council a couple of weeks ago. At that time there was some discussion about the projects and a desire for a competitive swim venue that was expressed by Councilmember Mike Barber. As a result of this it was back to the drawing board.

A copy of the 20 million dollar bond package, as it was presented to City Council, was distributed to the Commission.

The previous Monday night there was discussion about a competitive swim venue, what it would involve and what amenities might be included. At that point City Council passed a motion to have a competitive swim venue considered for the bond.

At this point Parks and Recreation is working on defining estimates for proposed swim venues. There will be a public meeting on July 16, 2008 at 7:00pm in Council Chambers. The public will be able to express their interest in the proposed bond. There will be public information disseminated showing the 20 million dollar list and options for a pool.

Commissioner, John Beaman, Jr., asked if the list was in any order.

Bruton replied stating that according to public input, City Council direction, and Commission guidance it may be some combination of all items on the list.

Beaman expressed concern and discontent with City Council's direction post Commission recommendation.

Bush stated that despite Commission efforts the priority now for some people is a competitive swim center. Bush supports that a competitive swim center is part of a Parks and Recreation bond.

Beaman stated that the public has turned down a competitive swim center twice; therefore it sounds as though the public is wrong, but it is going to be done any way. Beaman doesn't believe this should be a top priority and the department will be set up for failure again without some type of private/public partnership.

Hoggard stated that there has been discussion about a 20 million dollar swim facility and asked if this would completely do away with facility investment and land acquisition.

Bruton replied stating yes.

Bush stated that the same organizations and people who are behind a swim center have all seen the publicity regarding what the Y's are doing and headline publicity about lower socioeconomic groups not having access to swimming. Bush is unsure that 10 million dollars, half of the proposed bond, will fund what is listed (a 150 meter competitive pool for local meets). An advantage of a community wide centrally located swim center is the benefit for competition swimming and leisure and therapeutic swimming 365 days a year. Bush believes the cost for this type venue is most likely 13.5-14 million dollars. Greensboro currently does not have this type of facility that is open to the public, unless you pay for it. Bush supports a state of the art facility; however not a Cadillac type, 75,000 square foot facility - it is not affordable.

Bruton stated that the 10 million 250 thousand dollars is one option. Parks and Recreation is putting together other numbers that speak to amenities. The 10 million dollar figure was derived from the CIP and at that point the department thought there would be a bond referendum in 2010, then perhaps design in 2011 and build in 2011-2013, depending on how the bonds are sold. There was some discussion among the CIP subcommittee that with this time frame there would be time to receive public input, conduct public outreach, and build momentum.

Hoggard stated that this item does not need action as this Commission has previously taken action.

Beaman inquired as to the deadline for placing this on the ballot.

Bruton replied stating she is not aware of the deadline. In terms of the process the public hearing is the next step before the ultimate decision. Bruton stated that she will find out the Board of Elections deadline.

Kuester stated that following the public input session on Wednesday night City Council will decide what is placed on the bond.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Update**

Bernadette White, Project Coordinator, stated that Greensboro is very proud to celebrate 75 years of service from the Parks and Recreation Department. Under Section I, Chapter 4, Article 18, under City Code on November 7, 1933 City Council laid the foundation for an organized department focusing on recreation. The Commission was charged with duties and responsibility of formulation of recreational programming within the City. Their first official business was to hire a director. Dan R. Neil was hired in 1934 as the first Parks and Recreation Director. He began the process of land acquisition. Country Park opened as the department's first park on July 4, 1934 and will be celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the coming year. Since that time Parks and Recreation has grown to encompass more than 170 parks and over 3,500 acres of land. In addition, the department offers a multitude of program, services, and leisure opportunities. The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee is working diligently to bring a year of celebration to the citizens, which will begin in November 2008 and end in November 2009. Recognition will be included in programs, at recreational venues, facilities and events. Staff will use the established scheduled program to highlight the anniversary through fees, prizes, and promotions. Special functions will begin in October 2008 with a reception for current and previous Commission members. A Parks and Recreation retiree luncheon will be scheduled. A float will be included in the upcoming parade and the last function concludes with an old fashion family fun day on October 17, 2009 at Country Park. White invited the Commission to be an active part in the events as we are looking forward to a future of growth and achievement.

Brown requested that the schedule of events be electronically sent to the Commission.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Mountains to Sea Trail**

Mike Simpson, Watershed Parks and Trails Director, recognized in attendance Alex Ashton, Guilford County Parks and Open Space. Simpson stated that the Mountains to Sea Trail begins on the Tennessee/North Carolina boarder at Clingman's Dome in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park and goes to Jockey's Ridge on the Atlantic Coast. The trail was conceived in the 1970's by trail supporters, primarily Allen deHart, supporter of 30 years, who has written several books dedicated to the Mountain to Sea Trail. deHart helped to establish the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail organization which has been the main taskforce. Supporters throughout the state have been the backbone and provided the sweat equity to build the trail which is about 60% complete. The trail was originally designed at 938 miles. Due to popularity the trial is now over 1,000 miles. Simpson stated that in 1997 seven of our Watershed Park trail systems were designated by the State as a part the Mountains to See Trail. Bur-Mil Park is currently a popular hub for Mountains to See Trail activities. Haw River Park, Bryan Park, Northeast Park, Northeast Middle and High Schools will eventually be included on the route.

Simpson presented a map of the Mountains to Sea Trail showing the existing trails and alternate routes.

Simpson requested the Commission to consider a resolution of support for the Mountains to Sea Trail in Guilford County. Doing so would give official recognition to the effort of continuing this trail across Guilford County. The MPO and Guilford County Parks and Recreation Commission have adopted this resolution. Funding would be supplied through local and state grants envisioning maintenance being conducted by sponsors, volunteers, and trail maintenance crews.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Rose Marie Ponton and seconded by John Beaman, Jr. to adopt the Mountains to Sea Trail resolution. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

#### **Nominating Committee Appointment**

David Hoggard, stated that although his term will expire in August he would like to continue serving at least one more year. Hoggard was nominated as Chair and Rose Marie Ponton was nominated as Vice-Chair for 2009.

Kuester stated that she will speak with the City Clerk's Office in regards to the continuation of Hoggard's appointment. A vote will take place at the next Commission meeting to select the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Bush stated that he is concerned that the Commission represents an older demographic and feels that the Parks and Recreation Commission needs young professionals as these are the people that will be voting on bonds and making decisions on the future of Parks and Recreation.

#### **SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

- NONE -

#### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Kuester encouraged the Commission not to lose heart and that on a daily basis the department needs the support. The type discussions tonight are important for us to be able to share with City Council and the City Manager's Office. It is very important to the department and community that this Commission sticks with us through the rough times and the good times. Kuester thanked the Commission for their continued support.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

**John Beaman, Jr.** inquired if it would be appropriate as a member of the Commission to address City Council about the vacant seats on this Commission. Beaman also stated that the soccer tournament held weekend before last with teams from all over the country praised Greensboro's facilities and organization and were very pleased.

Kuester replied stating yes.

**Marc Bush** recognized John Hughes and Parks and Recreation for their efforts regarding the State Games. Although not confirmed, it is believed that logistically and financially this year was the most successful State Games ever. The numbers increased for swimming at approximately 800 swimmers at Lindley Pool. Bush stated that he will continue to push the aquatic center/swimming center from a Sports Commission standpoint. From a personal standpoint he believes the Parks and Recreation bond list is something that will show well. Greensboro needs a new athletic venue that we can showcase.

**Ken Free** inquired if it is possible to emphasize how important Parks and Recreation is with Council during a closed session with our City Council liaison in order for them to relay Parks and Recreation items to City Council items. Free stated he doesn't want City Council to lose focus on what needs to be done.

Kuester replied stating that a closed session would not be allowed; however the Commission has the option to call and speak with the City Council liaison.

**Paul Brown** mentioned the Commission outing to the Greensboro Grasshopper's ballgame.

**Rose Marie Ponton** stated that she enjoyed the Grasshopper's game and the State Games were great.

**David Hoggard** stated that this Commission made a commitment to be advocates for bonds. Since City Council changed the bond priorities it may limit the Commission's enthusiasm and could certainly put a damper on some members; however members still need to be front line supporters. Hoggard mentioned the War Memorial article "Don't replace the War Memorial Stadium".

With no further business Hoggard adjourned the meeting at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant  
Greensboro Parks and Recreation